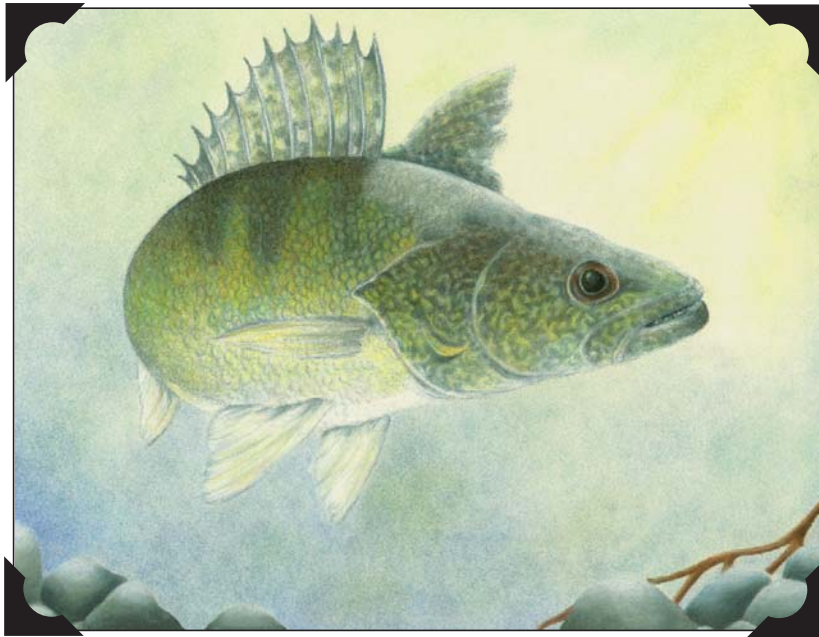


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**This state does not have an official state fish, but its state department of natural resources chose this fish for the contest.*



Future Walleye Fishing

The fishing line was lying limp in the water. A little nibble occurs now and then that keeps you on the edge of your seat waiting and anticipating the big catch. All of a sudden you give a good jerk and you have a good-sized walleye fighting against you on the other end of the line. All fishermen and women love the thrill of a good-sized catch. The question is, can we keep the fish numbers up and the fish habitats clean for future fishing enjoyment?

South Dakota is one of the best walleye producing states in the nation. The milk-eyed walleye is the most popular and sought after fish by anglers in my area. The walleye is known to have a white tip on the bottom of the caudal fin and a black blotch on the end of the dorsal fin. It likes darker fresh water to live in and feeds on insects, invertebrates, and other small fish. The lake levels have risen in eastern South Dakota where I live, which improves the fish habitat and benefits the fish production.

We can preserve the future of fishing by choosing to conserve and protect the fish and their environment so later generations of children and families have as much fishing enjoyment as we do now.

Example from Grades 10–12
South Dakota winner

Apache Trout

Oncorhynchus apache



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Name

Arizona trout

Identifying Features

Apache trout have rich, olive-green sides and a golden-yellow belly and darken to brass or copper on their head. They have orange-red “cutthroat” marks below their lower jaw.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 18 inches in lakes and 6 inches in streams

Weight

Up to 3 pounds

Life span

Unknown

Habitat

Apache trout inhabit clear lakes and forested streams of the White Mountain area in east central Arizona.

Feeding Behavior

Apache trout feed on smaller fish and insects.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring or early summer

HOW: The female constructs a nest-like depression called a “redd” over loosely covered gravel and lays about 200-600 eggs while males swim by and fertilize them.

Did you know?

The Apache trout is one of only two trout native to Arizona. The White Mountain Apache Tribe is actively helping the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve the population numbers of the Apache trout, which is listed as a “threatened species” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Atlantic Cod

Gadus morhua

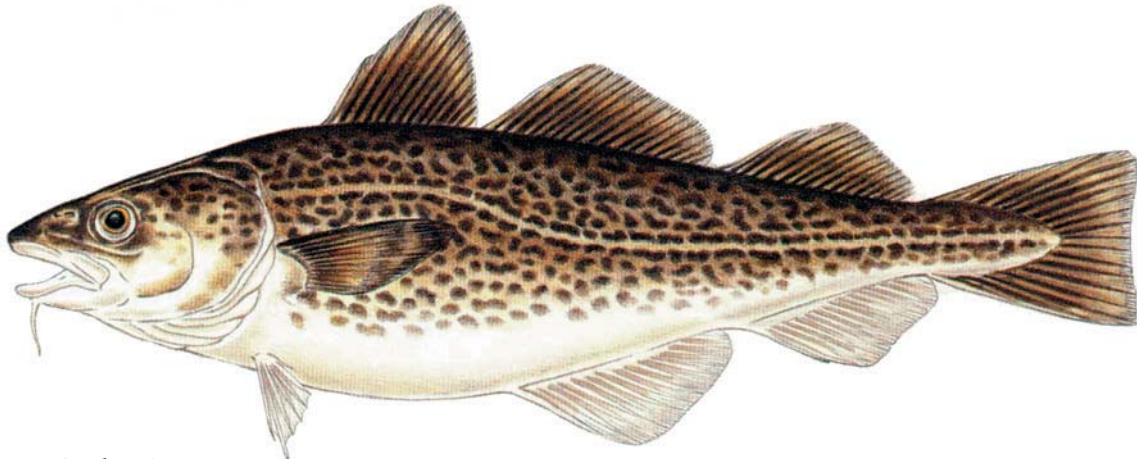


Illustration by Victor Young

Common Name

cod

Identifying Features

Atlantic cod have one barbel (whisker) on the chin. Their coloration is variable depending on their surroundings. The back may be brown or green, yellow or red, or a combination of these colors. Atlantic cod have a light-colored belly and a long, light, lateral band along their body.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 72 inches

Weight

Up to 12 pounds

Life span

Up to 20 or more years

Habitat

Atlantic cod are found in coastal waters, usually on or near the bottom of the continental Atlantic shelf, from New England to the Mid-Atlantic states. The preferred water temperature is cold.

Feeding Behavior

Atlantic cod feed on crustaceans, mollusks, sea squirts, worms, and other fish.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Winter or spring

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 28-34°F

HOW: The female cod lays more than 9 million fertilized eggs into the sea, where the eggs will float and are vulnerable to wind and predators.

Did you know?

The Atlantic cod has two color phases: red and gray. It can survive at depths of 1,500 feet.

Atlantic Sailfish

Istiophorus platypterus

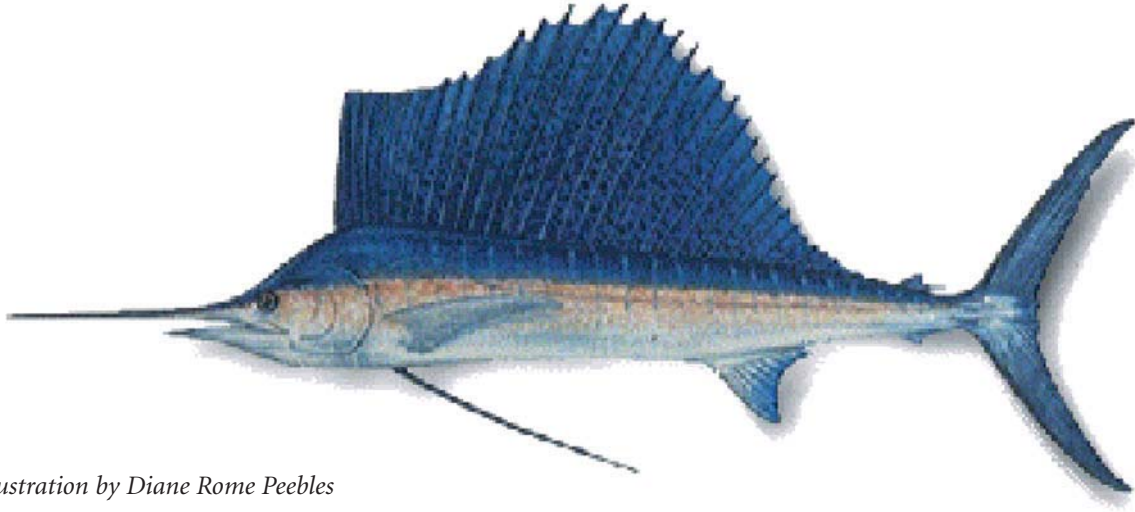


Illustration by Diane Rome Peebles

Common Names

sailfish, sail, spikefish, spindlebeak, spindlesnoot, mylmeen

Identifying Features

Atlantic sailfish have a long bill and a long, slender body of dark blue with silvery flanks and belly. Their blue dorsal fin has dark spots and is two times the height of the fish itself.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 84 inches (may reach 100 inches)

Weight

Up to 37 pounds

Life span

Up to 10 years

Habitat

Sailfish inhabit warm (above 70°F) Atlantic and Pacific waters.

Feeding Behavior

Atlantic sailfish feed on smaller fish, squid, and crustaceans.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Summer

HOW: The female swims near the surface of the water with one or more males and releases over 4 million eggs each year. The male fertilizes them, and the eggs hatch within two days.

Did you know?

The Atlantic sailfish can swim up to 60 miles per hour over short distances. Also, Atlantic sailfish grow very quickly. In its first year, an Atlantic sailfish can grow up to five feet!

Bluegill

Lepomis macrochirus



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

sun perch, bream, brim, blue sunfish, copperbelly, roach

Identifying Features

Bluegills have an olive to bronze back, with blue and orange sides. Two to five bluish bars extend from the mouth.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 10 inches (sometimes up to 15 inches)

Weight

Up to 1 pound (sometimes over 4 pounds)

Life span

Up to 11 years

Habitat

Bluegills inhabit quiet and moderately weedy lakes, ponds, bays, and slow-moving streams.

Feeding Behavior

Bluegills feed on larval and adult insects, plankton, snails, fish fry (young), and sometimes aquatic plants.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 68-70°F

HOW: The male builds a nest on a sand or gravel bottom near other bluegill nests. The female lays eggs in the nest. The male guards the nest and the fry.

Did you know?

Larger bluegills are found in deeper waters than small ones. Also, male northern bluegills become darker and more orange in color during the spawning season.

Bonneville Cutthroat Trout

Oncorhynchus clarki utah



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names	native trout, Utah trout, blueheads
Identifying Features	Bonneville cutthroat trout have a yellowish body with uniform spotting. Larger spots are found on the back half of the fish. They also have orange fins and red-orange “slash” marks on their throat.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length	Up to 18 inches in streams and 30 inches in lakes
Weight	Up to 4 pounds in streams and 18 pounds in lakes
Life span	Up to 20 or more years
Habitat	Bonneville cutthroat trout inhabit mountain streams and lakes in the Bonneville Basin of Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, and Idaho.
Feeding Behavior	Bonneville cutthroat trout eat plankton (passively floating, minute animal and plant life), insects, and fish.
Reproductive Behavior	WHEN: Spring or summer, depending on elevation HOW: The female digs nest-like depressions called “redds” in gravelly riffles in streams. Adults do not guard the nest.

Did you know?

Legend has it that the early pioneers were saved from starvation many times by catching this native trout. Today, the Bonneville cutthroat is listed as a “sensitive species” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Brook Trout

Salvelinus fontinalis



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names eastern brook trout, brookie, speckled trout, native trout, squaretail
Identifying Features Brook trout have a dark olive body with a brownish to greenish back and light worm-like markings. The sides are pale with several small red spots with blue borders. The lower fins have dark and light edges.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 18 inches (sometimes up to 34 inches)
Weight Up to 3 pounds (may reach 14 pounds)
Life span Up to 15 years
Habitat Brook trout inhabit clear and cold streams, lakes, and ponds, often with access to sea, but are mostly found in the headwaters of spring-fed streams.
Feeding Behavior Brook trout feed on tiny larval insects, small fish, and occasionally, field mice and snakes.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Late summer and fall
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 40-49°F
HOW: The female digs several redds (depressions) in a gravel bed in the headwaters of a small stream. Adults do not guard the nest.

Did you know?

A sea-run brook trout is known as a "salter" or "sea trout." A brook trout in the Great Lakes that migrates up its tributaries to spawn is known as a "coaster."

Channel Bass

Sciaenops ocellatus

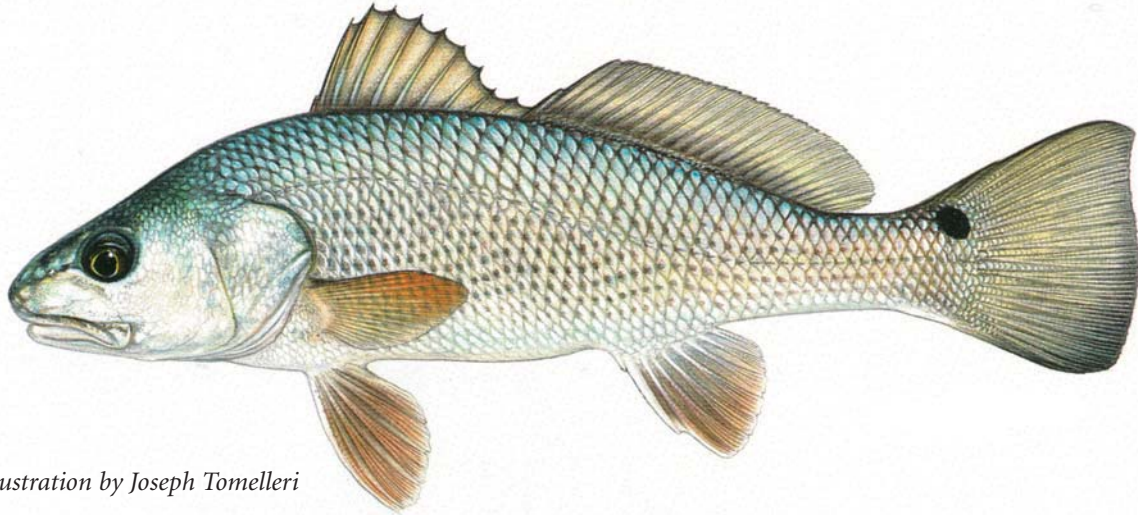


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names	red drum, redfish, spot-tail bass, red bass, red dorse, school drum, puppy drum
Identifying Features	Channel bass have a copper-red body with one or more black spots on the tail.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length	Up to 27 inches
Weight	Up to 40 pounds (sometimes as big as 95 pounds)
Life span	Up to 20 or more years
Habitat	Juvenile channel bass are found inshore, in bays and channels off the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. As the juvenile grows to adult, around age 4, it prefers colder temperatures and moves back to the oceans.
Feeding Behavior	Channel bass feed on crustaceans, fish, and mollusks.
Reproductive Behavior	WHEN: Summer or fall PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: About 75°F HOW: The channel bass migrate out of estuaries (water where a river meets the sea) and lagoons into deeper water near the mouths of bays and inlets. The female broadcasts eggs randomly and the male fertilizes them.

Did you know?

Female channel bass can lay over a million eggs when they spawn.

Channel Catfish

Ictalurus punctatus



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names spotted cat, blue channel cat, Great Lakes catfish, lady cat
Identifying Features Channel catfish have eight barbels (whiskers), an olive-green to bluish body with dark spots, and a deeply forked tail.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 24 inches
Weight Up to 20 pounds
Life span Up to 11 years
Habitat Channel catfish inhabit deep streams, rivers, and lakes in eastern and central U.S., especially in deep stretches of sand, gravel, or rubble bottom. They also inhabit lakes, reservoirs, and ponds.
Feeding Behavior Channel catfish feed on insect larvae, clams, snails, crayfish, crabs, and aquatic plants. They locate food by probing the bottom with their barbels.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Late Spring-Summer
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 70-75° F
HOW: The male builds the nest in dark secluded spots under logs, the shade of boulders, holes in riverbanks, or barrels. The female scatters the eggs in the nest. The male guards the nest.

Did you know?

Young channel catfish are called "fiddlers." During the 1950s, commercial fisherman harvested nearly 270,000 pounds of channel catfish each year from the Mississippi River.

Chinook Salmon

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

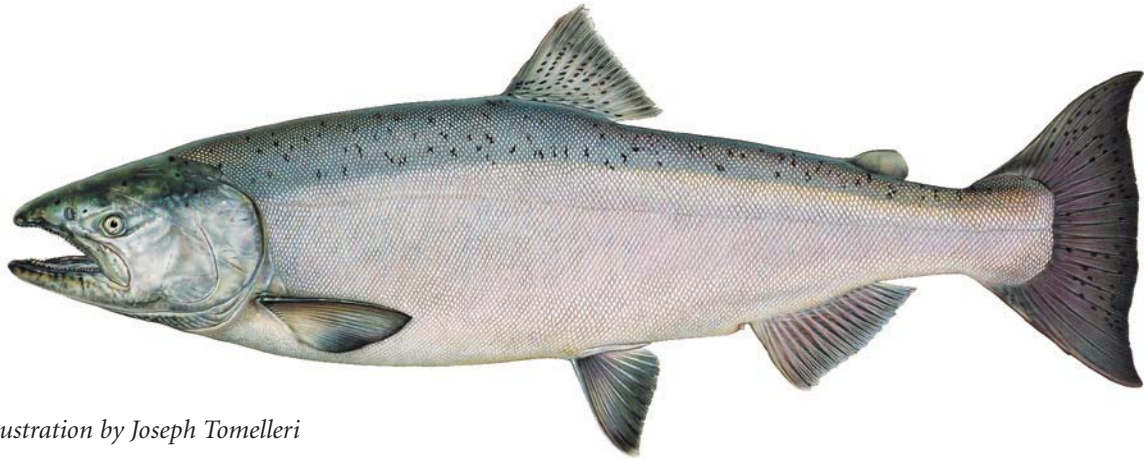


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names king salmon, spring salmon, tye, quinnat, blackmouth, blackjaw
Identifying Features Chinook salmon have a silver body with dark spots on the back and tail. They also have black gums.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 46 inches (sometimes up to 58 inches)
Weight Up to 43 pounds (sometimes up to 125 pounds)
Life span Up to 9 years
Habitat An anadromous (entering a river from the sea to breed) fish, the Chinook salmon lives in the northern Pacific Ocean but enters large Pacific coastal streams to spawn.
Feeding Behavior Chinook salmon feed on other fish, as well as squid, shrimp, crab larvae, and other crustaceans.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Fall, but may have separate runs in the spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 40-55°F
HOW: The female digs a large nest-like depression called a “redd” in a deep gravel riffle of main stream channels. She is accompanied by one dominant male and several smaller ones called “jacks.” The female guards the nest.

Did you know?

After spawning, the female Chinook salmon guards the nest for up to two weeks and then dies. The redd is sometimes 12 feet long and 1 foot deep. Some Chinook salmon swim as far as 1,500 miles upstream to spawn.

Cutthroat Trout

Oncorhynchus clarki

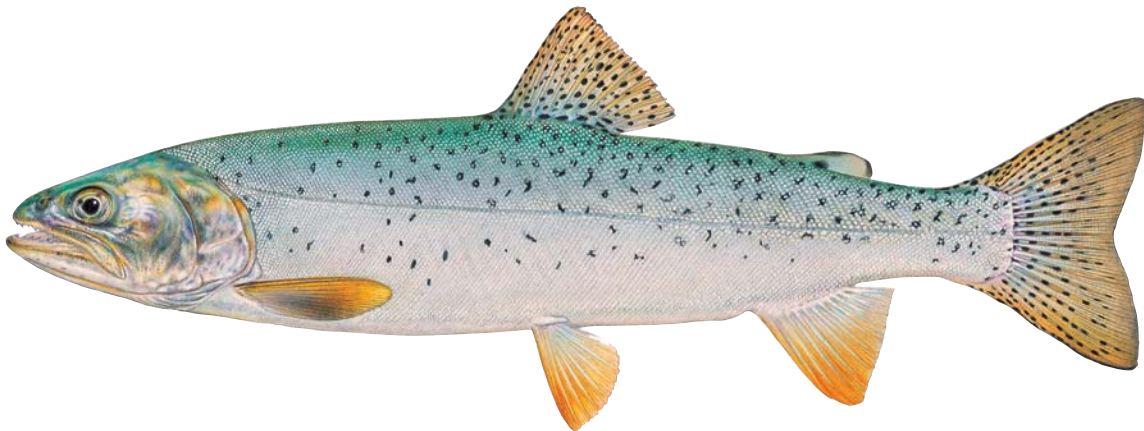


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Name native trout, cut, red throat, mountain trout, black-spotted trout
Identifying Features Cutthroat trout have a greenish back with black spots. Their sides are olive to silver in color. They have a red “cut-throat” mark on their lower jaw.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 19 inches
Weight Up to 5 pounds (may reach 40 pounds)
Life span Up to 7 years
Habitat Cutthroat trout inhabit cold streams and mountain lakes in the western U.S.
Feeding Behavior Cutthroat trout feed on insects, small fish, and occasionally trout eggs, crustaceans, frogs, and earthworms.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 55-62°F.
HOW: The female constructs nest-like depressions called “redds” by brushing aside gravel in small streams. The adults do not guard the nest.

Did you know?

There are 14 different recognized subspecies of cutthroat trout. Cutthroat trout do not successfully spawn in lakes.

Florida Largemouth Bass

Micropterus salmoides floridanus

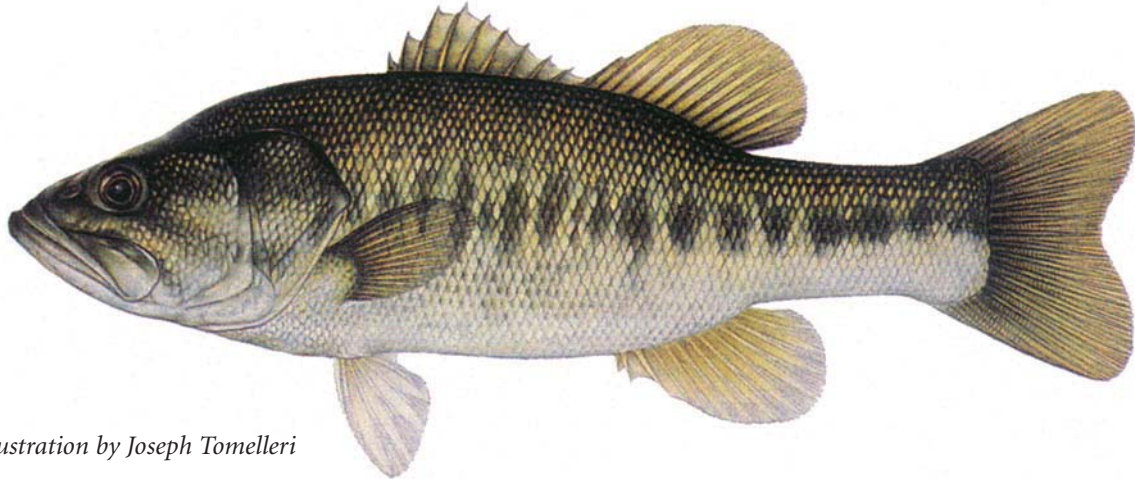


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Name Florida bass
Identifying Features Florida largemouth bass have a greenish back and a cream-colored belly. They have diamond-shaped vertical bars on their sides and a fin along the back that has a notch almost down to the back.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 25 inches
Weight Up to 10 pounds
Life span Up to 10 years
Habitat The Florida largemouth bass inhabits weedy lakes and ponds with firm, sandy bottoms.
Feeding Behavior Florida largemouth bass eat other fish, insects, and invertebrates. The young feed on zooplankton.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 63-68°F
HOW: The male digs a circular-shaped nest with its tail. The female lays eggs and the male fertilizes them. The male primarily guards the nest and the fry (young), although the female may help.

Did you know?

Each Florida largemouth bass nest may contain as many as 43,000 eggs.

Garibaldi

Hypsypops rubicunda



Photograph
by National
Audubon
Society

Common Name

orange-colored sunfish

Identifying Features

Garibaldi have a brilliant orange body with large body scales and a deeply forked tail fin. Juveniles have bright, iridescent blue spots on their body.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 14 inches

Weight

Unknown

Life span

Up to 17 or more years

Habitat

Garibaldi inhabit swirling waters along rocky reefs in the Pacific Ocean, off the California coast from Monterey Bay to Baja.

Feeding Behavior

Garibaldi eat sponges, small anemones, and occasionally worms and crabs.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring or summer

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 59°F

HOW: The male builds a 1-1/2 foot nest on a reef, clearing away all the growth except for red algae. The male defends the nest against intruders, and when the female swims by, the male entices her through clicking sounds and dashing to and from the nest. After the female lays the eggs, she leaves while the male spends 2-3 weeks guarding the nest.

Did you know?

Garibaldi can live in ocean depths of up to 95 feet. Garibaldi are extremely territorial and defend their homes and nests through aggression rather than camouflage.

Golden Trout

Oncorhynchus aguabonita



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Name Kern River trout, mountain trout, goldie
Identifying Features Golden trout have brilliant, gold sides with a red horizontal band and 10 dark oval marks called “parr marks.” Their fins have white edges.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 14 inches
Weight Up to 1 pound in streams (up to 11 pounds in lakes)
Life span Up to 7 years
Habitat Golden trout inhabit cold mountain lakes and streams at altitudes above 6,000 feet. They have been stocked at lower elevations with moderate success.
Feeding Behavior Golden trout feed on insects, especially caddis flies and midges, and also eat small crustaceans.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Early to mid summer
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 48-52°F
HOW: The female digs several redds (depressions) at the tail of a pool and deposits eggs. Adults abandon the nest.

Did you know?

The brilliant colors of the golden trout disappear if they are stocked at altitudes lower than 6,000 feet. Unlike other trout, the golden trout’s parr marks persist throughout their adult life.

Greenback Cutthroat Trout

Oncorhynchus clarki stomias



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names greenback trout, black-spotted trout
Identifying Features Greenback cutthroat trout have a few large spots on their body called “parr marks.” These are usually concentrated near the tail. They also have red “slash” markings on their gill covering.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 18 inches
Weight Unknown
Life span Up to 7 years
Habitat The greenback cutthroat trout inhabit the South Platte River, the Arkansas River, and the Colorado River.
Feeding Behavior Greenback cutthroat trout feed on aquatic insects and other fish.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Spring
HOW: The adults display courtship-like behavior and then the female digs a large nest-like depression called a “redd” in gravelly riffles. The adults defend the egg for a period of time.

Did you know?

Habitat loss and the introductions of non-native trout, such as the rainbow, brook, and brown trout, led to the decline of greenback cutthroat numbers.

Guadalupe Bass

Micropterus treculi

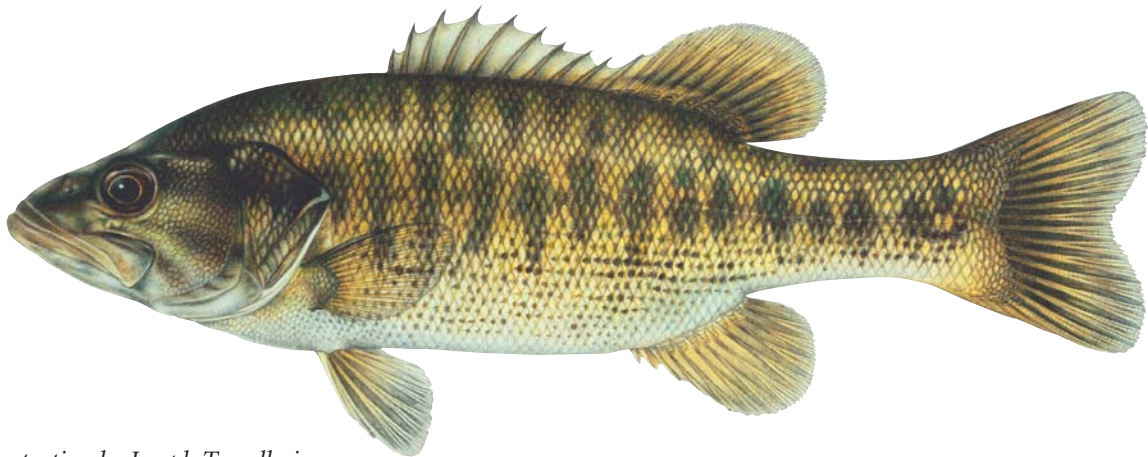


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names black bass, Guadalupe spotted bass
Identifying Features Guadalupe bass have a greenish body with 10-12 dark bars along the side (similar to a smallmouth bass).

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 12 inches
Weight Up to 1 pound
Life span Up to 7 years
Habitat Guadalupe bass are found only in Texas. Guadalupe bass typically inhabit flowing water, including the headwaters of the San Antonio River, the Guadalupe River, the Colorado River, and portions of the Brazos River.
Feeding Behavior Guadalupe bass feed on invertebrates and other fish.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Spring or summer
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 60-65°F
HOW: The male builds a gravel nest in flowing water. After the female lays up to 9,000 eggs, she is chased away and the male stands guard over the eggs until they are hatched.

Did you know?

Guadalupe bass may spawn a second time in the summer.

Humuhumunukunukuapua'a (Hawaiian Triggerfish)

Rhinecanthus rectanglus



Photograph by Keoki Stender

Common Names

Picasso triggerfish, reef triggerfish

Identifying Features

Humuhumunukunukuapua'a have a diamond-shaped body with armor-like scales. A dark stripe crosses their silver sides and belly. Their fins are pale blue. They are called a triggerfish because of their sharp, spike-like dorsal fin.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 18 inches

Weight

Unknown

Life span

Unknown

Habitat

Humuhumunukunukuapua'a inhabit the tropical coral reefs of the Pacific Ocean.

Feeding Behavior

Humuhumunukunukuapua'a feed on bottom-dwelling invertebrates and seaweed.

Reproductive Behavior

HOW: The female builds a nest and the male fertilizes her eggs. The female defends the nest vigorously until the eggs are hatched.

Did you know?

Humuhumunukunukuapua'a means "fish with a pig's nose" in Hawaiian. The Humuhumunukunukuapua'a sleeps on its side at night.

King Salmon

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

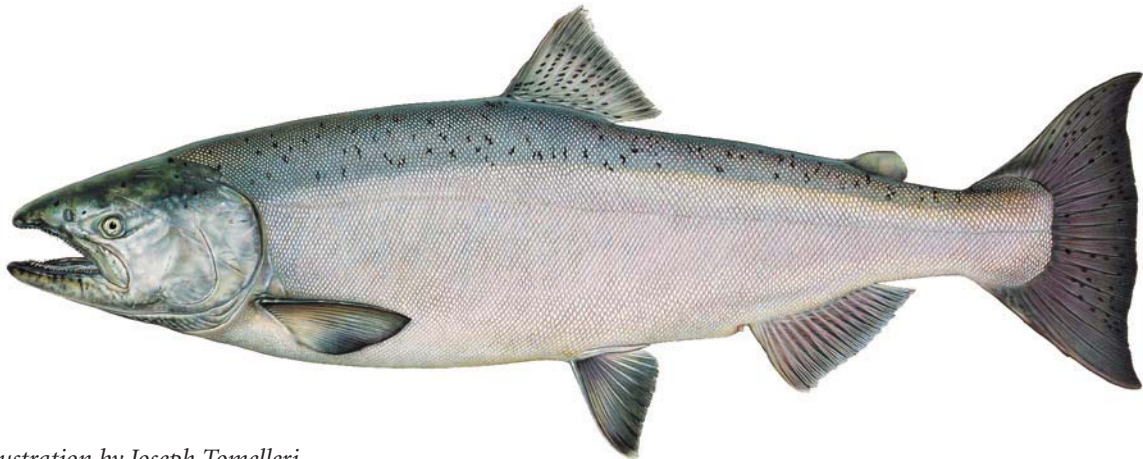


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Name Chinook salmon, spring salmon, tye, quinnat, blackmouth, blackjaw
Identifying Features King salmon have a silver body with dark spots on the back and tail. They also have black gums.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 46 inches (sometimes up to 58 inches)
Weight Up to 43 pounds (sometimes up to 125 pounds)
Life span Up to 9 years
Habitat An anadromous (entering a river from the sea to breed) fish, the king salmon lives in the Northern Pacific Ocean but enters large Pacific coastal streams to spawn.
Feeding Behavior King salmon feed on other fish, as well as squid, shrimp, crab larvae, and other crustaceans.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Fall, but may have separate runs in the spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 40-55°F
HOW: The female digs a large nest-like depression called a “redd” in a deep gravel riffle of main stream channels. She is accompanied by one dominant male and several smaller ones called “jacks.” The female guards the nest.

Did you know?

After spawning, the female king salmon guards the nest for up to two weeks and then dies. The redd is sometimes 12 feet long and 1 foot deep. Some king salmon swim as far as 1,500 miles upstream to spawn.

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Name	native trout
Identifying Features	Lahontan cutthroat trout have a golden-brown to olive back with black spots. They have red-orange slash marks around their throat.
TYPICAL ADULT	
Length	Up to 25 inches
Weight	Up to 5 pounds
Life span	Unknown
Habitat	Lahontan cutthroat trout inhabit lakes, streams, and rivers in the Lahontan sub-basin of the American Great Basin in west-central Nevada.
Feeding Behavior	Unknown
Reproductive Behavior	WHEN: Spring or summer HOW: The adults display a courtship ritual, and then the female digs a large nest-like depression called a “redd” in gravelly riffles. The adults defend the egg for a period of time.

Did you know?

Previously unregulated fishing and the introduction of non-native species have reduced the Lahontan cutthroat populations to 11% of their original stream population and one-half of 1% of their original lake population. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has placed the Lahontan cutthroat trout on its Threatened Species List.

Landlocked Salmon

Salmo salar

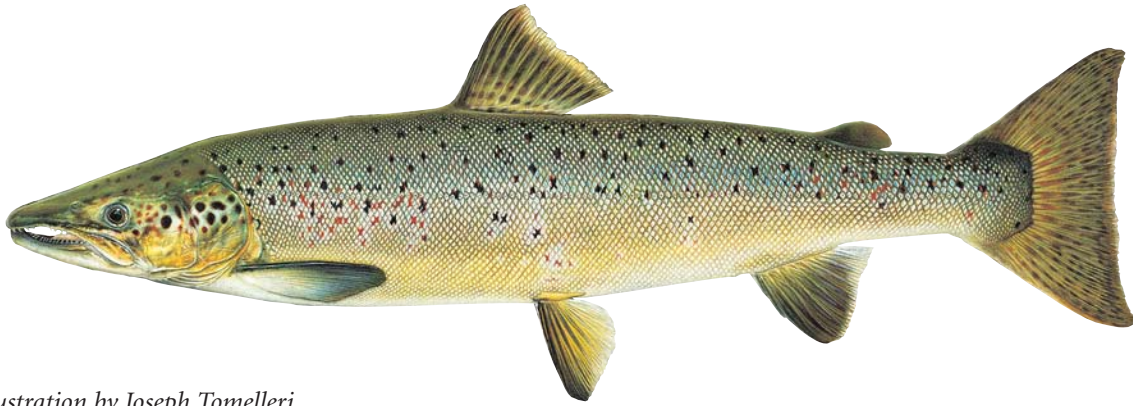


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names	Atlantic salmon, ounaniche, Sebago salmon
Identifying Features	Landlocked salmon have a gray-green back with a silver head and silver sides and a white belly. It has a series of black spots in a lateral line on its body.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length	Up to 36 inches (may reach 60 inches)
Weight	Up to 5 pounds
Life span	6 years
Habitat	Landlocked salmon inhabit clear, cold lakes (with gravelly inlets for spawning) on the Atlantic coast.
Feeding Behavior	Landlocked salmon eat crustaceans, insects, and small fish including herring and sardines.
Reproductive Behavior	WHEN: Fall PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 42-50°F HOW: The female digs a nest-like depression called a “redd” by brushing aside small gravel. The female deposits her eggs in the redd and then abandons the nest to return to the lakes.

Did you know?

When landlocked salmon spawn, they can swim far upstream, negotiating nearly impassable falls.

Largemouth Bass

Micropeterus salmoides

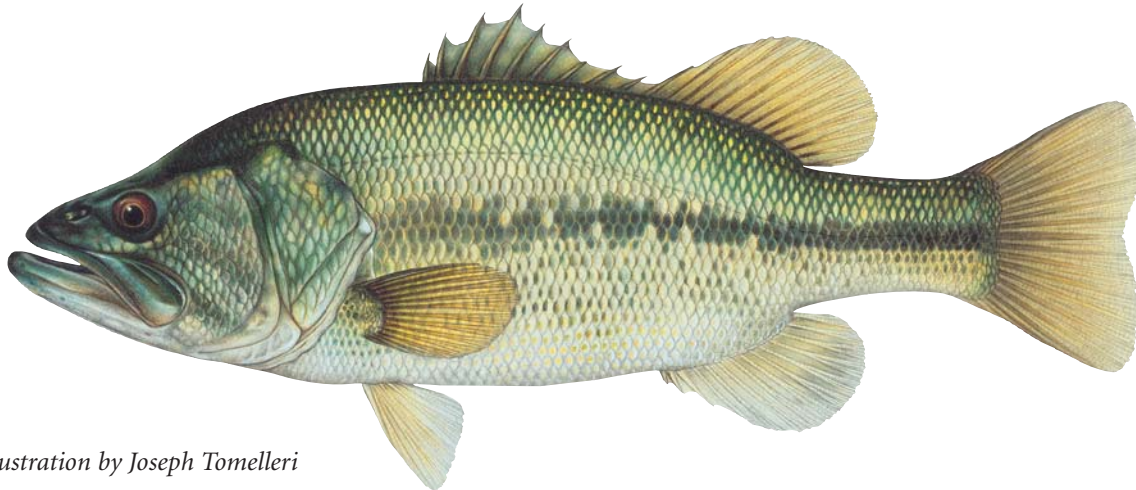


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names black bass, green bass, bigmouth, linesides, bucketmouth
Identifying Features Largemouth bass have a black to green back with lighter sides and a pale belly. They have a dark wavy band running the length of their sides. Their mouth extends beyond their eyes.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 21 inches
Weight Up to 10 pounds
Life span Up to 15 years
Habitat Largemouth bass inhabit weedy lakes and ponds and slow-moving rivers and streams throughout U.S. They prefer areas with lots of cover (brush, sunken logs, and rocks).
Feeding Behavior Largemouth bass feed on whatever is available, including small fish, leeches, salamanders, frogs, snakes, and turtles. They also feed more heavily as the water temperature rises.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 63-68°F
HOW: The male constructs a 2-3 foot nest by sweeping away debris with its head and tail. It will usually nest near heavy cover such as brush and logs. The male guards the eggs and fry for about a month.

Did you know?

Largemouth bass have a sensor along their lateral line that picks up underwater vibrations as subtle as small fish swimming nearby. The eyes of largemouth bass absorb more light than human eyes. In shallow waters, largemouth bass can detect colors, especially red.

Longear Sunfish

Lepomis megalotis



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names	sun perch, pumpkinseed, creek perch, red-belly bream, red perch, blackear and red bream
Identifying Features	Longear sunfish have a blue-green back and sides speckled with yellow and emerald with an orange and yellow belly. They are named for having a long earflap that is typically bordered with white. Emerald blue wavy lines run from the mouth to the earflap.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length	Less than six inches
Weight	Less than one pound
Life span	Up to 4 years
Habitat	Longear sunfish prefer shallow, weedy waters of lakes and ponds; also found in quiet streams. They are frequently found in the same streams as spotted bass.
Feeding Behavior	Longear sunfish eat mainly aquatic insects, as well as mites, small crustaceans, fish eggs, mollusks, filamentous algae, and small fish.
Reproductive Behavior	WHEN: Spring-to-summer PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 75-80°F HOW: The male prepares the nest, of pebbles, gravel and sand, in shallow waters along the shoreline using its fins to clear a circular depression and fan silt away. It then locates a female who lays sticky eggs in the nest. The male aggressively guards these eggs and within two weeks of hatching herds the larvae into dense schools to more safely search for food and mature.

Did you know?

Longear sunfish feed more extensively at the surface of the water than some other sunfish. They are well known to most young anglers as being the first "perch" they ever caught on a cane pole with a dangling worm for bait.

Muskellunge

Esox masquinogy



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names muskie, lunge, maskinonge, great pike
Identifying Features Muskellunge have a light green back and a pale belly. Their sides are marked with dark diamond-shapes.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 52 inches (sometimes up to 60 inches)
Weight Up to 46 pounds
Life span 30 or more years
Habitat In the summer, muskellunge inhabit the deep water of ponds, lakes, streams, and slow-moving rivers. In the fall, they live in shallow weedy areas.
Feeding Behavior Muskellunge are carnivores (meat eaters) and feed on fish, frogs, crayfish, and occasionally, young mice, muskrats, and ducklings.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Mid to late spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 49-59°F
HOW: Adults pair off at spawning. The female sometimes swims along shoreline with 1-2 smaller males nearby. The eggs are scattered at random over lake or river vegetation. Adults do not guard the nest.

Did you know?

Muskellunge have three distinct color phases: spotted, clear, and barred.

Northern Pike

Esox lucius



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names great northern pike, jack, jackfish, pickerel, snake, gator
Identifying Features Northern pike have light bars on an olive-green back. Their fins have dark spots with a reddish tinge.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 39 inches
Weight Up to 24 pounds (sometimes up to 40 pounds)
Life span Up to 25 years
Habitat Northern pike inhabit large, weedy bays of natural lakes in the northern U.S. and slow, meandering rivers with heavy weed growth. They can also be found in ponds, lakes, and streams. Northern pike live in shallow water in the summer and deep water in the winter. As the fish grow larger, they prefer colder water temperatures.
Feeding Behavior Northern pike eat mostly fish, but also frogs, crayfish, mice, muskrats, and ducklings.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Early spring, just after ice-out
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 40-70°F
HOW: Eggs are scattered at random in small tributary streams, marshes adjacent to lakes, or shallow, weedy bays. Adults do not guard the eggs.

Did you know?

Female northern pike grow faster and live longer than males. The northern pike is one of two freshwater fish known to live on three continents: North America, Europe, and Asia.

Paddlefish

Polyodon spathula

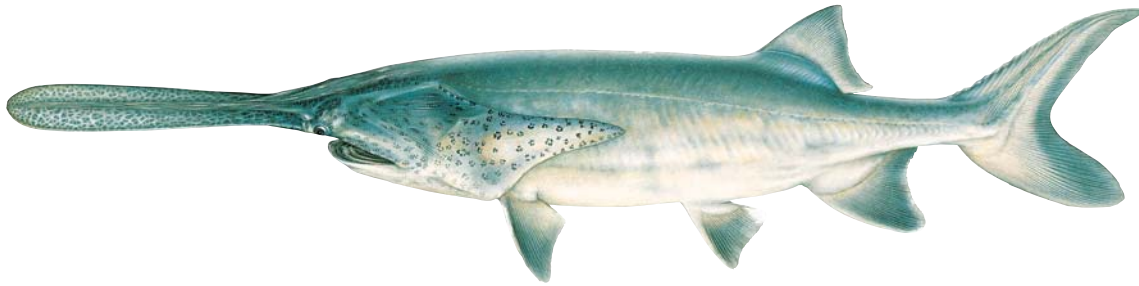


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names spoonbill, spoonbill cat, shovelnose cat, spadefish
Identifying features Paddlefish are gray to dark blue with white sides and a white belly. They also have a long, paddle-shaped snout and a pointed gill cover that extends to the middle of the body.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 68 inches
Weight Up to 67 pounds (sometimes over 100 pounds)
Life span Up to 30 years or more
Habitat Paddlefish inhabit slow-moving stretches of large rivers and adjoining backwaters, especially where bottoms are muddy.
Feeding Behavior Paddlefish swim with bills wide open, swaying slowly from side to side to feel for concentrations of plankton. They filter plankton with gill rakers (strainer-like teeth). Paddlefish also eat small crustaceans, algae, and mayflies.
Reproductive Behavior **WHEN:** Spring
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 50-60°F
HOW: As the water level rises, female paddlefish deposit eggs at random on silt-free gravel, either exposed to the air or barely submerged. Adults do not guard the eggs.

Did you know?

There are only two living species of paddlefish in the world—one in North America and the other in China. Paddlefish eggs are a delicacy and are often used to make caviar. They can grow to be 1 foot long in their first year.

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout

Oncorhynchus clarki viginalis



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names New Mexico cutthroat trout
Identifying Features Rio Grande cutthroat trout have a yellowish-green to gray-brown body with scattered black spots. They have a densely spotted tail.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 10 inches
Weight Up to 1 pound
Life span Up to 8 years
Habitat Rio Grande cutthroat trout inhabit mountain streams and rivers.
Feeding Behavior Rio Grande cutthroat trout feed on insects, zooplankton, and crustaceans.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Spring or summer
PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 48-52° F
HOW: The female lays between 200 to 4,500 eggs on a gravel nest in flowing water where high levels of dissolved oxygen exist.

Did you know?

The Rio Grande cutthroat trout is the southernmost species of cutthroats. The introduction of the rainbow trout led a decline in the populations of Rio Grande cutthroat trout, combined with early logging, grazing, and hunting practices.

Spotted Bass

Micropterus punctulatus

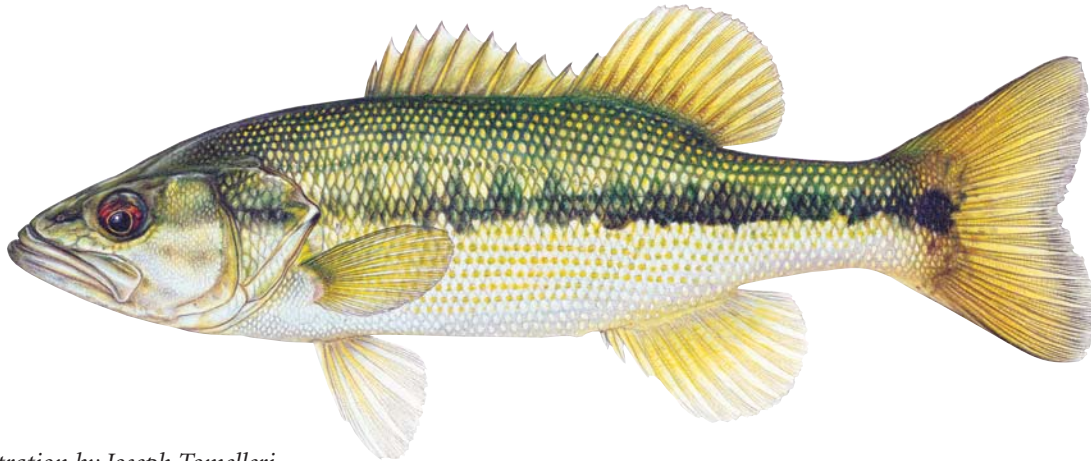


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

Kentucky bass, spot, Alabama spotted bass

Identifying Features

Spotted bass have an olive green back with dark, diamond shaped blotches above a white belly

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 18 inches

Weight

Up to 3 pounds

Life span

Up to 7 years

Habitat

Spotted bass inhabit clear, slow-moving, small to medium-sized streams and deep reservoirs.

Reproductive Behavior

Spotted bass feed on crayfish, small fish, and larval and adult insects.

WHEN: Spring

REFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 63-68°F

HOW: The male sweeps silt from the rock bottom near heavy cover, such as brush or logs, to make a nest. After the female lays eggs on the nest, the male fertilizes them and guards the eggs and the fry (young) for about a month.

Did you know?

Spotted bass become lighter in color when the water becomes murkier. They are seldom found in natural lakes. A spotted bass subspecies known as the "Wichita spotted bass" is thought to be extinct.

Steelhead Trout

Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names coastal rainbow trout, steelies
Identifying Features Steelhead trout have a glowing steel-blue body with spots on the upper body. Their tail has radiating rows of black spots.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 34 inches
Weight Up to 8 pounds (may reach 24 pounds)
Life span Up to 11 years
Habitat Steelhead trout are anadromous fish, which means they inhabit the Pacific Ocean and Great Lakes area except during spawning season, when they move to rivers and streams.
Feeding Behavior Steelhead trout feed on immature and adult insects, plankton, crustaceans, fish eggs, and small fish.
Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Spring
PREFERRED TEMPERATURE: 50-60°F
WHERE: Steelhead trout spawn in large, swift, boulder-filled streams at the gravelly tail of a pool or a riffle at the head of a pool.
HOW: The female digs several nest-like depressions called “redds” and deposits eggs in each one. The adults do not guard the eggs.

Did you know?

A steelhead tagged in the Aleutian Islands was caught six months later in Washington, 2,400 miles from the tagging site.

Striped Bass

Morone saxatilis

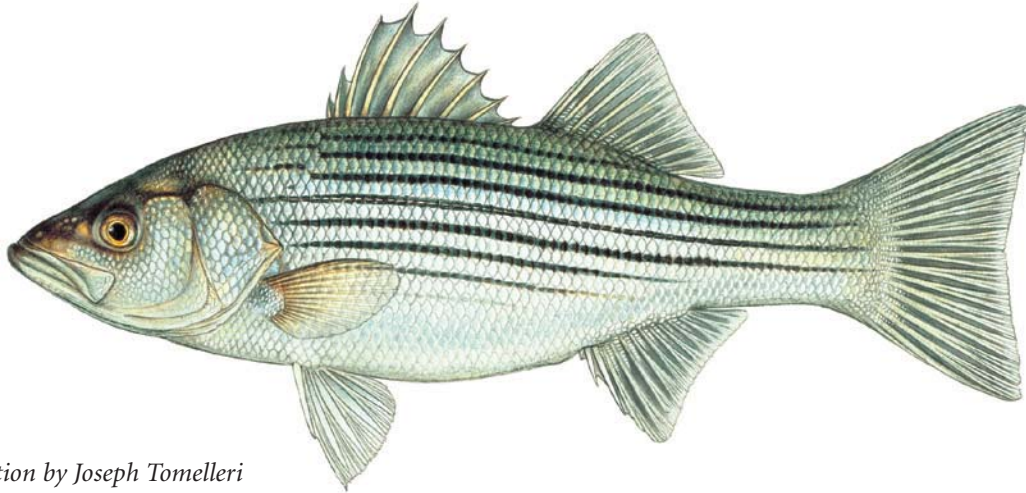


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

striper, rockfish, linesides

Identifying Features

Striped bass have a dark, olive-green to bluish-black back and silvery-white sides and belly. There are 7 to 8 black, unbroken, horizontal stripes along the side.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 35 inches (sometimes up to 48 inches)

Weight

Up to 37 pounds (sometimes up to 100 pounds)

Life span

Up to 9 years

Habitat

Striped bass are an anadromous species of fish, inhabiting both fresh water and salt water, depending on the time of year. Striped bass live in the Atlantic and Pacific coastal waters and the Gulf of Mexico but enter freshwater streams to spawn.

Feeding Behavior

Striped bass feed on threadfin, gizzard shad, crustaceans, insects, and bottom organisms. The heaviest feeding times are at dawn and dusk.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 55-60°F

HOW: Adults swim up tributary streams and spawn below dams or natural obstructions such as rock formations. The female deposits eggs in light to moderate current. The moving water keeps the eggs afloat until they hatch. Adults do not guard the eggs.

Did you know?

Striped bass move in packs or schools to feed, with all the members tending to feed at the same time. Up to 50 striped bass may spawn together.

Tarpon

Megalops atlanticus



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

silver king, silverfish, tarpum

Identifying Features

Tarpon have a narrow band of dark blue-green on their back and a single dorsal fin with an elongated ray. They also have a prominent upturned lower jaw and silver sides with large scales.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 96 inches

Weight

Up to 80 pounds

Life span

Up to 16 years

Habitat

Tarpon inhabit shallow, warm Atlantic and Gulf coastal waters and estuaries (water where a river meets the sea), including lagoons, mangrove swamps, and rivers.

Feeding Behavior

Tarpon feed on sardines, anchovies, and crustaceans.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring or summer

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 72-82°F

HOW: Along the ocean floor, the female tarpon lays more than 12 million eggs.

Did you know?

Adult tarpon swallow their food whole. Tarpon need to swallow air and are often seen "rolling" on the surface gulping for air.

Walleye

Stizostedion vitreum vitreum

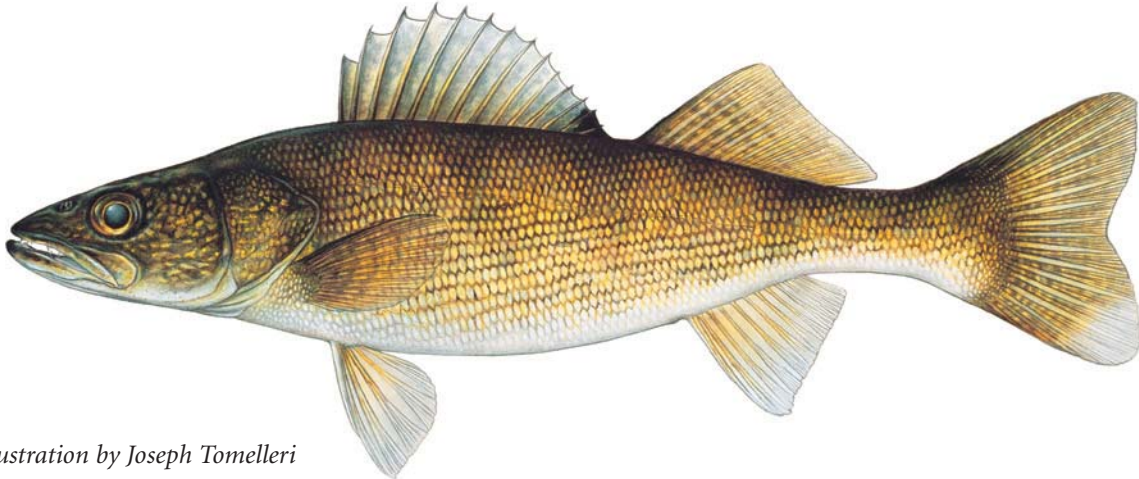


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

walleyed pike, pickerel, jackfish, dorè

Identifying Features

Walleye have a milky cast to their eyes. They have a long, round, olive body that has gold flecks on the sides with a white tip to the lower fork of the tail. There is a distinct black blotch on the rear end of the first dorsal fin.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 30 inches

Weight

Up to 10 pounds

Life span

Up to 26 years

Habitat

Walleye are most numerous in large, cool, windswept lakes with low to moderate clarity. They also live in large rivers.

Feeding Behavior

Walleye most prefer other fish, but also eat aquatic insects, leeches, crayfish, snails, and larval salamanders. They normally feed in dim light.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 45-50° F

HOW: No nests are built. The female scatters eggs randomly along a shallow, windswept shoreline with rubble bottom. Adults do not guard the eggs or fry (young).

Did you know?

Walleye are named for their prominent, milky eyes. Blue walleye were once common in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario but are now thought to be extinct.

Weakfish

Cynoscion regalis

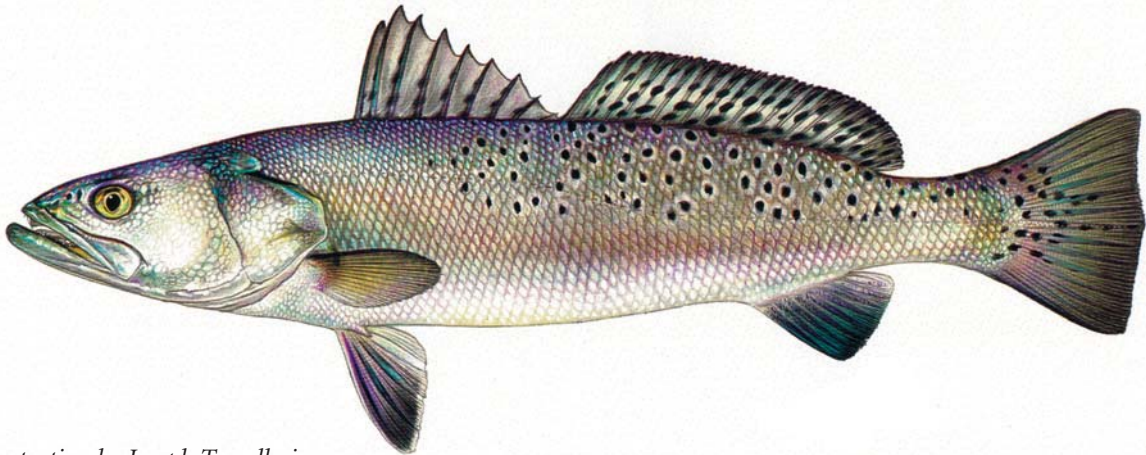


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names tide runner, sea trout, yellow fin trout, yellow mouth, squeteague, gray trout, gray weakfish

Identifying Features Weakfish have a projecting lower jaw with a soft mouth. They have an olive-green back with dark spots above copper sides. Their fins have a yellow tinge.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length Up to 36 inches

Weight Up to 18 pounds

Life span Up to 12 years

Habitat While not spawning, weakfish live in sandy, shallow waters of the temperate seas off the North Atlantic coast, especially around the mid-Atlantic states.

Feeding Behavior Weakfish eat other fish and crustaceans, especially crab and shrimp.

Reproductive Behavior WHEN: Spring or summer

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 56-68° F

HOW: During spawning season, weakfish migrate north and inshore, entering sounds, bays, and estuaries (water where a river meets the sea).

The male makes a croaking or drumming sound to attract females. The female broadcasts eggs randomly. The eggs hatch within 48 hours.

Did you know?

Weakfish have a delicate mouth structure. Often, hooks from fishing poles will pull out their jaws. This is how weakfish got their name.

White Bass

Morone chrysops

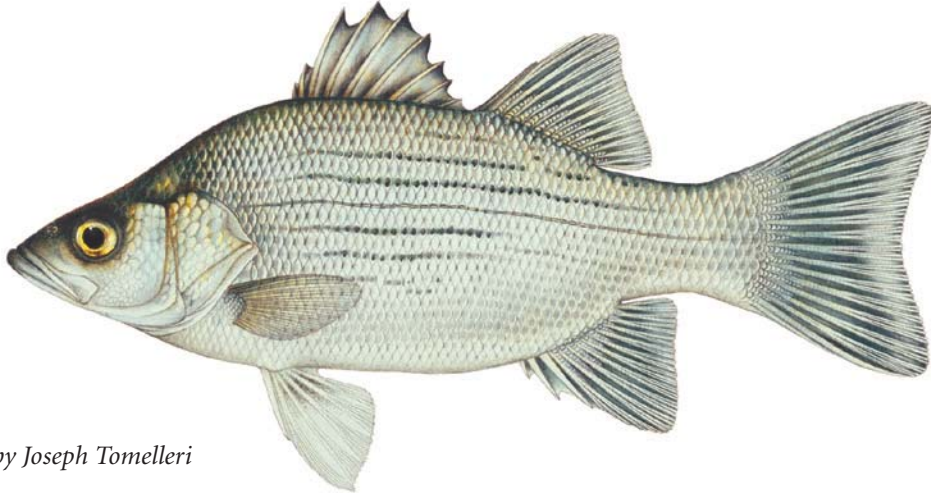


Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

silver bass, striper, sand bass, whitey, dwarf striper

Identifying Features

White bass have a blue-gray back with silver sides that have about 5 to 7 bold, horizontal stripes above the lateral line. White bass have separated dorsal fins and a protruding lower jaw.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 15 inches

Weight

Up to 3 pounds

Life span

Up to 6 years

Habitat

White bass inhabit large lakes connected to major river systems or big rivers with moderate current and are found throughout the Midwest, including the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, as well as some southern and southwestern states down to the Gulf of Mexico. The preferred water temperature is 65-75°F.

Feeding Behavior

White bass prefer shad and emerald shiners but will eat any fish available, as well as insect larvae and crayfish. Their heaviest feeding times are at dawn and dusk.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 58-64°F

HOW: The white bass swim upstream in rivers or shoal lakes to a barrier, such as a dam, and drop eggs in light current, over weeds, debris, and rock. The adults abandon the eggs. Up to a million eggs are spawned.

Did you know?

The white bass is one of only three members of the bass family found in Oklahoma.

White Crappie

Pomoxis annularis



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Common Names

papermouth, speckled perch, bachelor perch, silver bass, calico bass

Identifying Features

White crappies have an iridescent, olive-green back with spots arranged in 7-9 vertical bars. Their sides are silvery with emerald and purple reflections.

TYPICAL ADULT

Length

Up to 15 inches

Weight

Up to 2 pounds (sometimes up to 5 pounds)

Life span

Up to 8 years

Habitat

White crappies inhabit natural and man-made lakes and slow-moving, silt-laden rivers, as well as weedy ponds and lakes.

Feeding Behavior

White crappies feed on suspended plankton (passively floating, minute animal and plant life), small fish, fish eggs, and larval aquatic insects.

Reproductive Behavior

WHEN: Spring

PREFERRED WATER TEMPERATURE: 62-65°F

HOW: White crappies nest in colonies. The male guards the nest and fry (young).

Did you know?

White crappies can survive in very warm water temperatures, sometimes approaching 85°F.